

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION OF VIRGINIA
HISTORICAL INVENTORY

35

COUNTY: Elizabeth City

CLASS : Home

"CHSTRVILLE", HOME OF GEORGE WYTHE

This write-up is a part of the Virginia W. P. A. Historical Inventory Project sponsored by the Virginia Conservation Commission under the direction of its Division of History. Credit to both the Commission and W. P. A. is requested for publication, in whole or in part. Unless otherwise stated, this information has not been checked for accuracy by the sponsor.

Research made by
Mary Bullifant,
Hampton, Virginia.

July 20, 1937.

1. SUBJECT:

"Chesterville", Home of George Wythe.

2. LOCATION:

Five miles from Hampton, between Langley Field and Back River Road.

3. DATE:

Date unknown..

4. OWNERS:

Sir George Yeardley's Heirs.
John Winder.
Levin Yeardley Winder.
Anton Schmeltz
Frances Schmeltz Hudgins

5. DESCRIPTION:

The mansion house was situated on Back River, and was originally a beautiful estate. The house was destroyed by fire twenty years ago, and there is nothing left of it but some foundations and chimneys.

6. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

"Chesterville", named for Old Chester in England, which was the home of Sir George Yeardley, Governor of Virginia in 1616 and 1626. He was the founder of the House of Burgesses in 1619. He was the ancestor of Elizabeth Yeardley who married William Winder of Somerset, Maryland. Their son, John Winder, married Mary Gwynn Hudgins of Elizabeth City County, and they built "Chesterville". After the Revolutionary War, the estate of "Chesterville" was divided among the sons. "Laming", now a part of Langley Field, became the home of Dr. J. T. Winder and his descendants until after the War Between the States. "Belle Reve" was another portion of the Chesterville estate, given to another son. At the close of the War Between the States, what was left of the Chesterville plantation was sold by Levin Yeardley Winder to Mr. Anton Schmeltz, and again it came into the hands of a Hudgins who married Frances Schmeltz, daughter of Anton Schmeltz, in 1867.

George Wythe is supposed to have been born at "Chesterville", but the records do not show that it was ever owned by any of the Wythe family.

George Wythe, born in 1726, was descended from an honorable line of ancestors who had held, for several generations

high positions in Elizabeth City County, The following represents his descent from the emigrant, Thomas Wythe, Gent., who died in Elizabeth City County in 1694. He was the great-grandfather of George Wythe.

Thomas Wythe, Gent.
Magistrate of Elizabeth City
County in 1693,

Anne Harwood, daughter of
Captain Thomas Harwood,
Justice of the Peace,
Elizabeth City County.

Children

John Thomas Wythe

Anne, married William Mallo-
ry of Elizabeth City County,
February 1720.

Children

Thomas Wythe married Ann Sheppard, daughter of Baldwin
Sheppard of Elizabeth City County.

Children

Thomas, married - Anne, - William, - Elizabeth, who married
Margaret Walker Nicholas Curle.

Children

Thomas

George,
1726-1806

Anne

At the Bicentennial at William and Mary College, a presen-
tation was made in behalf of the State Bar Association of
Virginia, of a bronze Memorial Tablet, which is placed in
the Chapel, beneath which lie several distinguished Virgin-
ians. The tablet is mounted on oak, with the inscription
in black letters,

"GEORGE WYTHE, L. L. D.

Signer of the Declaration of Independence, Member of the
Commission of 1779 on the Revision of the Laws of Virginia,
Judge of the Chancery Court, First Professor of Law in the
College of William and Mary, The American Aristides, He
was an exemplar of all that is noble and elevating in the
profession of the Law, A. D. 1893 this tablet is erected
by the Virginia State Bar Association as a tribute to-
His courage as a patriot, His ability as an instructor,
His uprightness as a lawyer, His purity as a Judge.

7. ART:

8. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Notes from William and Mary Quarterly, January 1894,
Library of Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia.